



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Nevada Press Foundation Announces 2026 Awards of Excellence Winners and Hall of Fame Inductees

LAS VEGAS, Nev. — The Nevada Press Foundation honored the winners of its 2026 Awards of Excellence and inducted four journalists into the Nevada Newspaper Hall of Fame on Saturday, September 26, at the Springs Event Center at Springs Preserve in Las Vegas. The annual celebration recognized achievements in reporting, photography, design, advertising and community service across Nevada's urban, rural, magazine and college publications.

This year's contest recognized work from 30 publications with 365 first-, second- and third-place awards. Among the honorees was Mary Hynes of the Las Vegas Review-Journal, who received Story of the Year and Outstanding Journalist in the Urban Division in the same year she joined the Hall of Fame.

"These awards reflect the critical role Nevada journalists play in keeping our communities informed, engaged, and connected," said Brian Allfrey, executive director of the Nevada Press Association and Nevada Press Foundation. "We are proud to recognize the incredible talent and dedication across all divisions of Nevada media."

2026 Nevada Newspaper Hall of Fame

The Hall of Fame Luncheon honored four inductees for their lasting contributions to Nevada journalism:

Mary Hynes. A longtime Las Vegas Review-Journal reporter and editor, Hynes has led major news coverage and mentored generations of journalists. Her career includes investigative reporting on public corruption, the Alpine Motel Apartments fire and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ron Kantowski. Kantowski chronicled Southern Nevada sports for nearly four decades at the Las Vegas Sun and Las Vegas Review-Journal. His columns and features captured the people behind the games and the region's growth as a sports destination.

Mike Smith. The Las Vegas Sun's editorial cartoonist since 1983, Smith has used satire to examine politics and public life for more than four decades. His nationally syndicated work is also preserved in UNLV Libraries' archives.

Howard Stutz. Stutz has covered Nevada's gaming, tourism and business industries since the 1980s. His reporting and editing career includes the Las Vegas Sun, Las Vegas Review-Journal, CDC Gaming Reports and The Nevada Independent.

2026 Sweepstakes and Special Award Winners

The following recipients earned top honors for public service, overall excellence and individual achievement.

Community Service

Urban: Mary Hynes and Staff, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Rural: Leanna Lehman, Fallon Post

Magazine: Gabriela Rodriguez, Las Vegas Weekly

Freedom of the Press

Staff, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Advertising General Excellence

Urban: Staff, Reno News & Review

Rural: Staff, Nevada Appeal

Magazine: Jaci Goodman, edible Reno-Tahoe

General Excellence in Print

Rural: Staff, The Record-Courier

Magazine: Staff, RJ Magazine

College: Anna Weigand, The Scarlet & Gray Free Press

General Online Excellence

Urban: Staff, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Rural: Staff, The Record-Courier

Magazine: Cheree Boteler, edible Reno-Tahoe

College: Charlize Angeles and Jamie Anderson, The Scarlet & Gray Free Press

Outstanding Journalist

Urban: Mary Hynes, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Rural: Kelsey Penrose, Carson Now

Magazine: Johnathan L. Wright, RJ Magazine

College: Matthew Mondschein, The Scarlet & Gray Free Press

2026 Individual and Special Award Winners

Journalist of Merit

Alan Halaly, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Outstanding Graphic Designer

Urban: Wes Rand, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Rural: Kyler Klix, Nevada Appeal

Magazine: Corlene Byrd, Las Vegas Weekly

College: Nicholas Carballo, The Scarlet & Gray Free Press

Outstanding Visual Journalist

Urban: Madeline Carter, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Magazine: L.E. Baskow, RJ Magazine

Editorial of the Year

Victor Joecks, Las Vegas Review-Journal

"Clark County's shameless cover-up"

Story of the Year

Mary Hynes, Las Vegas Review-Journal

"County Contract Scandal"

Photo of the Year

L.E. Baskow, Las Vegas Review-Journal

"Fernando Mendoza is sort of winner Raiders need (diving touchdown photo)"

Editorial Cartoon of the Year

Michael Ramirez, Las Vegas Review-Journal

"Presidential obsession"

Podcast of the Year

Bob Conrad and Kristen Hackbarth, This Is Reno

"This Is Reno's podcast and radio show"

Video of the Year

L.E. Baskow and Alan Halaly, Las Vegas Review-Journal

"Nevada's 'white gold' rush"

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